



Week 4 - Love



*Listen in the silence. Listen in the noise.
Listen for the sound of the Spirit's voice.*

Before we begin: This is the fourth and last week in Advent. We have silenced all but one candle in the illustration. We began with all the lights lit, then each week we have quieted another candle to illustrate our goal of focusing and listening only for God-with-us: Emmanuel. As we move into the season of Christmas, may the Christ candle warm your heart and light your path.

Invocation

Bless this time, God, and allow us to recognize your love in the silence, in the noise, and in the words.

Confession

You know us Lord. We have been busy listening for you but sometimes we don't realize it is you when you speak to us. You frequently use unexpected voices and we are baffled. Be patient with us as we struggle to hear your voice and to recognize your love when you come.

Psalm 89: 1

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

Luke 1:26-30

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."

Prayer

Leader: Creator God, help us not to be perplexed when we hear your words.

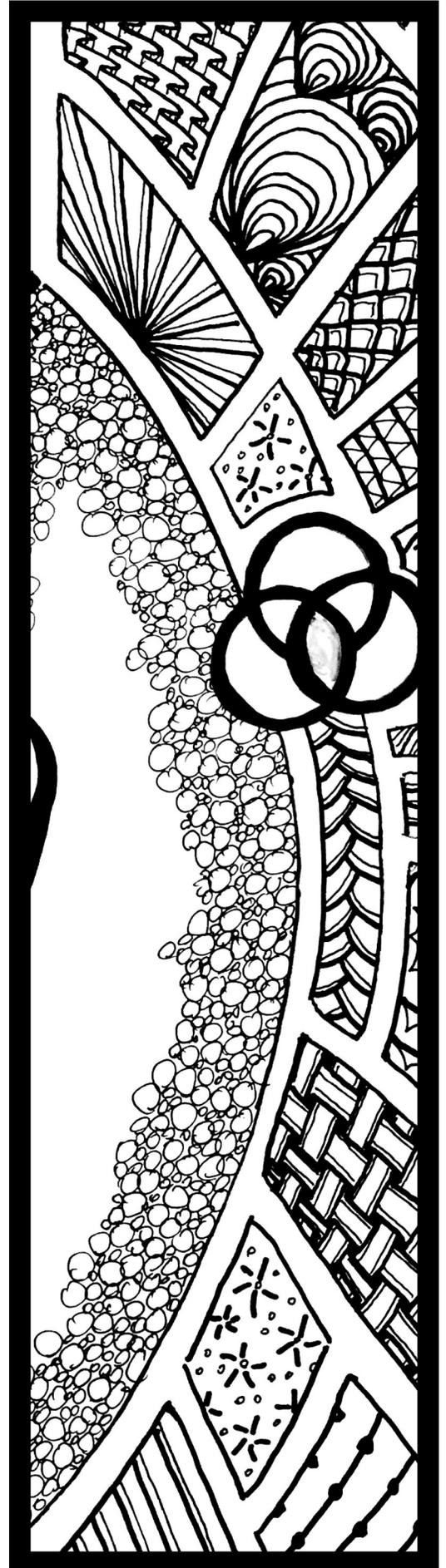
All: Help us to listen in the "silent night".

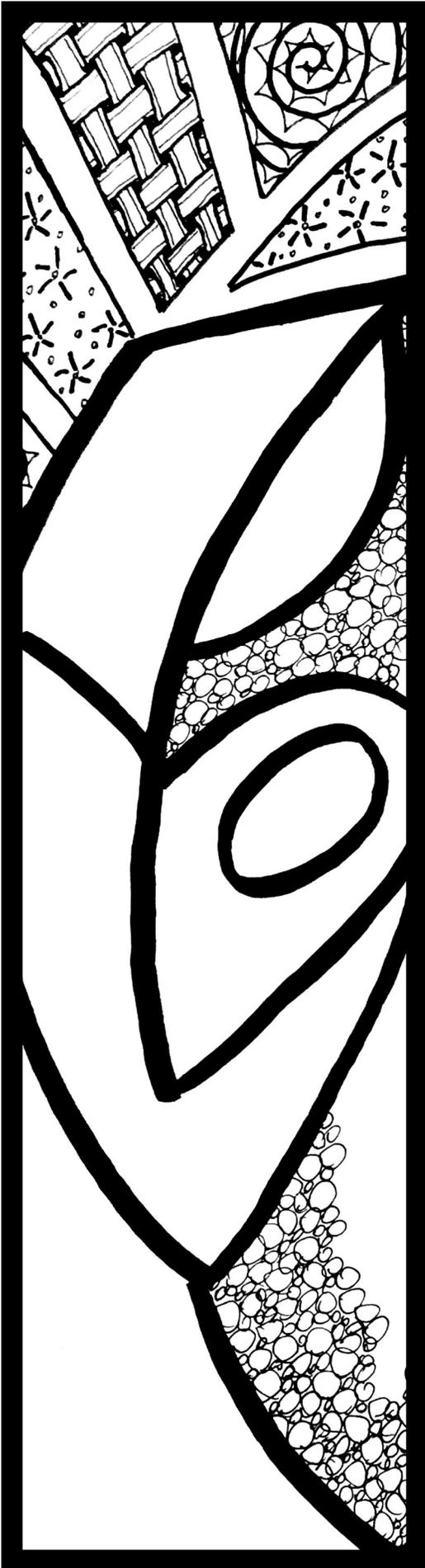
LEADER: Christ, give us wisdom to know your voice when we hear it. And to realize that it probably will come from an unlikely source. It will always be about love.

All: Help us to listen in the joyful noise of Christmas day.

Leader: Holy Spirit, when we hear your voice, give us courage to tell everyone the good news.

All: Help us to recognize the sound of your voice. Amen.
people.





A time to be still

You are invited into a time of silence. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly. **Know the God who LOVES you unconditionally.**

Poetry is the practice of silencing the extra words so that feelings can shine. This year we are exploring poetry as a spiritual practice. By slowing down, pondering, and picking words, we can better hear what God is saying to us.

Write down a few words that come from your heart. Or write the words to your favorite Christmas carol and really pay attention to the poetry in them.

Remember that this is not a contest. There is no grade. It is just a time to hang out with God and write down what comes to mind.

Read over your poem and then sit quietly with it, or colour the illustration.

A blessing

May God speak to us in the silence.
May God speak to us above the noise.
May we always listen for the sound of the Spirit's voice.



Prayer for Families

Loving God,
During this holy season of Christmas,
we ask for your blessing on all families.
Let Mary's openness to your wondrous ways be an inspiration to place all trust in you.
Let Joseph's courage provide hope during times of anxiety and uncertainty.
Let Jesus' life ignite all families with a spirit of light and love.
May the grace that encircled the Holy Family widen to embrace all families.
For this we pray.
Amen.

